

A PERFECT STORM—

State of the Lake

BY THOMAS L. EDDY

A “perfect storm.”

Evidence for this mounting tempest on Green Lake is readily visible to residents and visitors alike. Fewer days of ice cover. Heavy rainfalls.

Polluted tributaries. Rank aquatic plant growth. Low lake levels.

The result? A lake ecosystem out of balance.

The trend is a harbinger of climate change: *average 1.1°F temperature increase since 1950, earlier and accelerated springtime warm-up, greater frequency of extreme precipitation events, and drought.* Green Lake, like most Wisconsin lakes, must adapt to meet the challenges outlined by climate experts.

The Green Lake Conservancy land trust (GLC), likewise, is adapting to meet these challenges. Along with its lake partners¹, the GLC advocates the implementation of strategies that will improve and sustain the ecological integrity of Green Lake and surrounding watershed.

Given these challenges, what is the state of the lake? Good, but threats are present. Historically, numerous successful projects have been accomplished throughout the watershed. Now there is growing momentum that builds upon those successes. Since 2011, a core team of lake partners have held public

hearings, facilitated a Public Advisory Group, conducted a Citizen Survey, presented its first ever “state of the lake” report to the County Board of Supervisors, led watershed tours, and prepared a 10-year lake management plan (LMP).

The LMP provides a strategic roadmap for lake partners, promoting a comprehensive overview of objectives and strategies that tie in varied lake initiatives, including best management practices, such as agricultural and tributary buffers, retention basins, and minimal and no-till farming. Aquatic invasive species management and education, water quality monitoring, and land trust protection are included in the LMP roadmap.

The stakes are high. 52 percent of the equalized value of Green Lake is generated by 3 percent of the county’s land area. This means that an area about the size of Green Lake, 7,346 acres, accounts for more than half the property tax revenues of the county’s total 243,200 acres. To protect property values, it is imperative that lake and watershed management strategies be aggressively implemented and maintained. In short, the economic common good for our citizens is

Protecting
the land
that protects
the lake
16 properties
preserved
so far...



For more information
about our local land trust
please contact:

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920-294-3592

Make a contribution online at
GreenLakeConservancy.org

ensured by maintaining an ecologically balanced lake and watershed.

As one of 50 dedicated Wisconsin 501(c)3 non-profit land trusts, the GLC offers lake and watershed protection through acquisition, gift, and conservation easement. Trustworthy and experienced, the GLC is a proven strategic lake partner, protecting special places like Mitchell Glen, Norwegian Bay Wetlands, Sugar Island, Sunnyside Conservancy, and Winnebago Trail Nature Preserve. By leveraging approximately \$167,000 of tax-deductible donations, the GLC has conserved over 700 acres of watershed lands with an estimated market value exceeding \$4.5 million, including nearly 18,000 feet of shorelands on Silver Creek and Green Lake.

74 years ago, conservationist Aldo Leopold observed: *The oldest task in human history [is] to live on a piece of land without spoiling it.* After nearly two decades of land trust service, the

Green Lake Conservancy continues steadfast to this task, protecting land and waters in and around the Green Lake watershed.

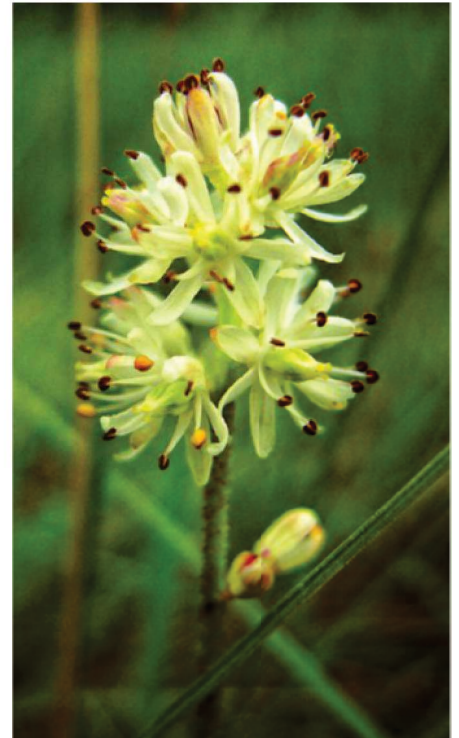
Thomas L. Eddy is a founding member of the Green Lake Conservancy and serves as VP for Conservation. To pledge a donation to the Conservancy or learn more about the work of the Conservancy, visit greenlakeconservancy.org.

To contact the Conservancy, call (920) 294-3592 or email info@greenlakeconservancy.org.

Photographs provided by Thomas L. Eddy.

(NOTE: An LMP draft issue can be viewed/downloaded at greenlakeconservancy.org. Public comments are encouraged.)

*Green Lake Sanitary District, Green Lake and Fond du Lac Counties Land Conservation Offices, Green Lake Association, Green Lake Conservancy, Cities of Green Lake and Ripon, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



The plant, *Triantha glutinosa*, is a threatened species that occurs in wetlands on at least two different Conservancy properties. The plant's common name is "false asphodel" and belongs to the lily family.

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